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DEPARTMENT OF GENETICS
Professor Joshua Lederberg

Area Code 415

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JUL 29 1969

Dear Congresswoman Mink:

Thank you for your letters of July 22-24 on the denaturation of solvents, in connection with H.R. 12751.

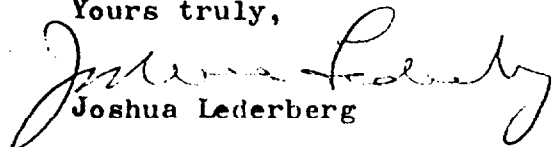
The hearings on your bill should, plainly, be the proper place to bring up technicalities. I was however very much struck by the news that allyl isothiocyanate (mustard oil) was being used as a denaturant, and even more by the information that this material was on FDA's approved list.

Enc: The reason for my reaction is that this compound was the first chemical to be reported to cause genetic mutations -- I enclose the scientific report on this by Auerbach and Robson which was published in 1944.

I would not proceed to an automatic condemnation of mustard oil: its natural occurrence is not, however, a very persuasive argument.

I am concerned that in our efforts to solve one problem, we merely produce another one unless we proceed cautiously and responsively to the need for thorough investigation.

Yours truly,


Joshua Lederberg

CC: Dr. Marvin Legator, FDA

Mr. Stanley H. Lowell, Counsel

Hobby Industry Assoc. of America

Dr. Samuel Epstein (Environmental Mutagen Society)